

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01

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R 311644Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2311

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL ROUNDUP

REF: LISBON 1730 AND PREVIOUS

1. MRPP BANNED:

THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MARCH 28 ANNOUNCED THE MAOIST MRPP HAS BEEN DECLARED ILLEGAL FOR FAILURE TO ALTER ITS PARTY SYMBOL IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL INSTRUCTIONS. THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL EARLIER IN THE MONTH ORDERED THE FEC-ML, FSP, UDP AND MRPP TO CHANGE THEIR SYMBOLS SO THAT THEY WOULD DIFFER FROM THOSE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES (REFTEL). THE FSP AND UDP

QUICKLY COMPLIED WITH COUNCIL INSTRUCTIONS. THE FEC-ML, AFTER FIRST STATING THAT IT WOULD NOT ALTER ITS SYMBOL, CHANGED ITS MIND, ISOLATING THE RECALCITRANT MRPP. THE MRPP HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SUSPENDED FROM THE ELECTIONS AND WAS UNDER INCREASING VIGILANCE BY THE AFM.

2. CUNHAL STATES AGRARIAN REFORM NEAR:

PCP SECRETARY GENERAL ALVARO CUNHAL WAS PRESENT MARCH 30 AT A COMMUNIST-SPONSORED FARM WORKER RALLY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE ALENTEJO TOWN OF SANTIAGO DE CACEM. SITE OF THE RALLY WAS A LARGE FARM OCCUPIED FEBRUARY 17 BY 80 FORMER SALARIED FARM WORKERS, AND WHICH HAS SINCE BEEN NAMED RED STAR COOPERATIVE. THEME OF CUNHAL'S ADDRESS WAS AGRARIAN REFORM. HE STATED THAT POST-MARCH 11 CONDITIONS MAKE BEGINNING OF AGRARIAN REFORM POSSIBLE "IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME." THE COMMUNIST LEADER TOOK CARE TO STATE THAT AGRARIAN REFORM WOULD TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS ACCORDING TO THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF THE VARIOUS REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. IN THE SOUTH THE PROBLEM IS EXISTENCE OF ESTATES WHICH ARE TOO LARGE (LATIFUNDIO), WHILE IN THE NORTH THE PROBLEM IS TOO MANY SMALL PLOTS OF LAND. CONTRARY TO WHAT "REACTIONARIES" ARE SAYING, PLEDGED CUNHAL, THE PCP DOES NOT WISH TO TOUCH A CENTIMETER OF LAND BELONGING TO SMALL FARMERS IN NORTH OR THE SOUTH. OBJECTIVES OF AGRARIAN REFORM ARE TO IMPROVE THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE WORKERS AND TO ALTER RADICALLY THE AGRICULTURAL "CONDITIONS." THE STRUGGLE WILL ONLY END, PROMISED CUNHAL, WHEN ALL LATIFUNDIOS ARE ABOLISHED, WHICH "SILL BE SOON, VERY SOON." CUNHAL NOTED THAT A SOLUTION TO THE COUNTRY'S AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE VERY COMPLEX, BUT CLAIMED THAT VOLUNTARILY-FORMED FARMER COOPERATIVES AND STATE-CONTROLLED FARMS USING COMMUNIST EXPERIENCE WOULD HELP RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS. WITH WORKERS RUNNING THE FARMS, EXCESSIVE AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS WOULD ALSO DECREASE, HE PROMISED.

3. OPORTO BISHOP CALLS FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION:

THE LIBERAL BISHOP OF OPORTO -- REV. ANTONIO FARREIRA GOMES -- FOCUSED HIS EASTER ADDRESS IN OPORTO ON THE PRESSING NEED FOR A NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AMONG PORTUGUESE REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGY. HE EXPRESSED FEAR THAT THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION NOW IN PROGRESS WOULD COME TO A "VIOLENT AND HOMICIDAL CONCLUSION" UNLESS THE CURRENT "ARTIFICIAL DIVISIONS" END. THE BISHOP DECLARED THAT RECONCILIATION WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE DIFFICULT, SINCE FOR SOME THE CLASS STRUGGLE (A NEW "PSEUDO-RELIGION") TAKES PRECEDENCE; IN THE VIEW OF THESE PERSONS RECONCILIATION WOULD HALT OR SLOW DOWN THE MARCH OF HISTORY. THE BISHOP ALSO REFERRED TO WIDESPREAD FEELING OF PANIC IN THE COUNTRY, WHICH HE SAID WAS A SIGN THAT THE BONDS UNITING THE SOCIETY HAVE BEEN BROKEN. THIS SAME PANIC GRIPPED SOME (READ SPINOLA) WHO WERE MISLED INTO BELIEVING THE "ABSOLUTELY FALSE RUMOR" THAT THEY WOULD BE KILLED IN AN "EASTER MASSACRE."

AFTER A BLAST AT IRRESPONSIBLE PRESS ("AUTHENTIC ABSOLUTE EMPIRES") AND AN APPEAL TO PRESS TO GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, THE BISHOP CRITICIZED THOSE WHO WOULD ORIENT PORTUGAL TOWARDS THE THIRD WORLD. HE SAID THAT THE "GIANT STEPS" RECENTLY TAKEN TOWARD LATIN AMERICAN (I.E., THIRD WORLD) HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN ERROR SINCE CONDITIONS THERE ARE PECULIAR TO THE REGION. HE ALSO URGED WORKERS NOT TO BE GUIDED BY SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE AND RETALIATION. IN THIS LINE, HE URGED THAT THERE BE TAKEN SOME "BEAUTIFUL GESTURE OF HUMANITY" (I.E., AMNESTY) TOWARDS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HELD PRISONER FOR MONTHS WITHOUT FORMAL LEGAL CHARGES AGAINST THEM.

4. COMMENT: THE BISHOP OF OPORTO IS NATIONALLY KNOWN AND RESPECTED FOR HIS DOGGED RESISTANCE TO THE SALAZAR/CAETANO REGIMES. HIS WORDS ON THE SUBJECT OF POLITICAL FREEDOM HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED AND HAVE RECEIVED BROAD AND FAVORABLE COMMENT.
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